



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Ninth Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown to Lead Federal Judges Association

SAN FRANCISCO – Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit is the new president of the Federal Judges Association, a voluntary group of nearly 1,000 judges dedicated to preserving the independence of the judiciary.

Judge McKeown, who has chambers in San Diego, assumed the leadership post today, succeeding U.S. District Judge W. Royal Furgeson, Jr., of Dallas. She has been a member of the FJA Board of Directors since 2007 and will serve a two-year term as president.



FJA activities focus on obtaining adequate funding for the federal courts; advocating for judicial vacancies to be filled in a timely fashion by highly qualified nominees; educating the public about the importance of an independent judiciary; and preventing diminution of judicial pay as provided for in the Constitution.

"The FJA recognizes that these are difficult times for the judiciary. Budget cuts, confirmation delays and judges leaving the bench for financial reasons – all of these strain our judicial system. Through the FJA, judges are able to speak with one voice about these and other critically important issues." Judge McKeown said.

The association recently warned that the current sequestration measures imposed on the federal government have put judicial branch services at risk. Courtroom operations, public information services, representation by federal defenders and staffing of pretrial and probation services have all been negatively affected. The group has also sought to draw attention to judicial vacancies, which currently number almost 10 percent of the 874 seats on federal district and circuit courts.

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The association also is continuing its participation in public education programs to highlight the importance of an independent judiciary in achieving fair and impartial decisions.

Nominated by President Clinton, Judge McKeown has served on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals since 1998. Prior to coming onto the federal bench, she had been in private practice with Perkins Coie in Seattle and Washington, D.C., and served as a White House Fellow. A Wyoming native, Judge McKeown received her B.A. from the University of Wyoming in 1972, her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1975, and an honorary doctorate from Georgetown University in 2005.

In addition to serving on the court, Judge McKeown has been active in judicial governance, most recently serving as chair of the Codes of Conduct Committee (judicial ethics) of the U.S. Judicial Conference. She also serves as the chair of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Council on Latin America.

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